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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002141

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CAPTION ADDED)

NOFORN

SIPDIS

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TAGS: KE MARR MOPS PINR PREF PREL PTER SO

SUBJECT: SOMALIS IN KENYA BEING RECRUITED TO FIGHT IN SOMALIA?

REF: A. NAIROBI 2103

1B. IIR 6 854 0003 10

1C. NAIROBI 1861

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Classified By: Charge d'affairs Michael Hoza, reasons 1.4 b,d.

11. (C) Summary: Reports from the Garissa Member of Parliament (MP) and UNHCR officials that Government of Kenya (GOK) officials and Somalis aligned with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) are supporting the recruitment of Kenyan-Somalis in North East Province and Somali refugees from the Dadaab refugee camps to fight Al-Shabaab raise concerns that the conflict in Somalia will spread to Kenya. UNHCR also reported recruitment of Somali refugees from southern Ethiopia and two efforts by Al-Shabaab militia to reach the Dadaab refugee camps to "cause a disturbance and kidnap a foreigner." End Summary.

12. (C) On October 5, UNHCR Kenya-Representative Liz Ahua reported to RefCoord that Ifo police had detained that day seven Somalis (one Somali possessing a UN ration card was not detained) in the Ifo refugee camp after discovering them recruiting young males to fight on behalf of the TFG against Al-Shabaab. According to Ahua, the Ifo Police Inspector said "rumors" were that TFG representatives were recruiting Somali males to be trained by the GOK military who would later be returned to Somalia to fight Al-Shabaab. Ahua said money was being paid on the spot to anyone who agreed to be "conscripted." According to Ahua, the recruiters had already recruited 28 refugees from the Hagadera refugee camp and were planning to proceed to the Dagahaley camp when they were detained. Refugee leaders told UNHCR they now feared for their safety as unemployed refugees were extremely angry with them for having reported the recruitment scheme and stymieing their chance to earn money.

13. (C) The Ifo Police Inspector detained the seven recruiters and, upon instructions from his supervisor in Garissa, transported them to the Dadaab police station. According to the UNHCR Associate Field Safety Advisor for Ifo camp, Kenyan "military officials" visited the Ifo police station after learning of the detentions and relayed to the Police Inspector their concern that this recruitment endangered the security of the region. UNHCR was not able to confirm if the recruiters were released or remained in detention. Ahua also said journalists who were in Dadaab and

may have picked up the story were "visited and advised to keep quiet," but she was unable to identify who visited the journalists.

¶ 14. (C) Ahua also relayed to RefCoord that a UNHCR contact with access to Kenya security reports told her that since mid-September two different groups of armed Al-Shabaab militia had been arrested along the Kenya-Somali border trying to enter Kenya. During questioning, both groups were reported to have confirmed that they were on their way to the Dadaab refugee camps to "cause a disturbance and kidnap a foreigner." Ahua also said she had received an unconfirmed report that 300 Somali asylum seekers in the Dollo Ado transit center in southern Ethiopia had left the camp for training in Kenya after having been recruited to fight on behalf of the TFG.

¶ 15. (C) On October 6, Garissa MP Aden Duale reported to PolOff his concern about reports he had received over the past 48 hours from concerned parents and religious leaders that the GOK was recruiting Kenyan youth between the ages of 18-30 to fight Al-Shabaab in Somalia. Duale said if true, GOK support for the recruitment effort would bring Somali's war into Kenya and directly undermine his message to Garissa youth to "stay out of Somalia - this is not your fight." Even if Kenyan Somalis have no real stake in Somali clan rivalries, Duale said that the possibility of getting paid such a lucrative salary (reported in the media as KSh 44,000 per month (approximately USD587) will be a nearly irresistible draw to the area's idle, unemployed youth and frustrate attempts by the area's leaders to keep Kenyan youth out of the conflict. Duale said that he raised his concerns to Minister of Defense Haji Yusuf Mohammad (a Kenyan-Somali MP from Ijara district in NE Province) and to the Permanent Secretary of Internal Security Francis Kimemia. While Kimemia refused to acknowledge anything, Haji Mohammad confirmed to Duale that Somalis were being recruited. "They (the Government) are just not thinking this through," Duale

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said. (Note: On October 7 the Daily Nation ran a story titled "Somalia War: Kenya on the Spot Over Secret Enlisting" alleging that more than 300 Garissa youth had been recruited to be trained in Kenya and fight in Somalia).

¶ 16. (S//NF) Comment: If the reports are true, recruitment of Somalis inside Kenya contradicts the GOK's planned support to the TFG that Kenyan officials had shared with us (reftel C) and suggests that the GOK and the TFG may not have been fully forthcoming about their plans for recruiting the fighting forces for the anticipated Lower Juba offensive. Even if it is not true that Kenyan-Somalis or Somali refugees in Kenya are being recruited to fight on behalf of the TFG, the open secret that the Kenyan military is training pro-TFG forces in Kenya could be sufficient to spread the Somalia conflict into Kenya. Unconfirmed reports that recruitment has occurred among Somali refugees in Ethiopia raises the prospect of the conflict spreading along the Somali/Ethiopia border region. Also, if the reports are true, the recruitment of refugees for any fighting force (reftel A) or the use of refugee camps as transit points for inserting fighters into Somalia (reftel B) are not only a violation of international humanitarian law and practice, but will greatly complicate Kenya's already tension-filled dialogue with UNHCR and the international community over the expansion of the Dadaab refugee camps and the fate of Somali refugees in Kenya. End Comment.

HOZA